5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Bedouin MJ4

which I was glad not to understand, but one of the Bedouin youngsters who were with us flared back at the townsman with remarks that reduced him immediately to unconditional surrender. Every noon and every night the boy took her some of our rice and bread, and she accompanied this men's caravan, entirely alone, till we arrived in the city. I remember that same boy's earnest and simple cordiality as he congratulated one of his warm friends on her recent marriage. "May God increase your prosperity, your camels and your children."

It is interesting to observe the fundamental economic conceptions in a community as primitive as that of the desert. Contracts are sacred in Arabia, as in the West. The guest and his host are bound by a contract the terms of which are perfectly understood by both parties and are practically never violated. Many of these Bedouins enter into contracts to dive at the opening of the diving season in Bahrein, and one never hears of such a contract being broken. There is little occasion for the making of contracts in the desert, but even at the price of personal loss, a contract entered into in good faith must be carried out.

The Bedouin's conception of property, however, differs from ours considerably. To say that it is communistic is to exaggerate, but there is certainly a stronge tinge of communism about it. Property, that is to say what the earth affords in the way of food, shelter and clothes, is of value because it sustains human life. The food, the clothes and the houses that the Bedouin's world can produce, are never enough to go around. He considers them valuable simply as they minister to human need. In the cases property comes to be regarded as sacred, much as it is in the West. Beautiful houses are admired and

,21: Fisher S-4 (no date) 1950 M1 Middle East
Bedouin MJ4

Strict discipline, necessary both in everyday routine and because of liability to attack, has left its mark on Badawin ways of thought. In religion, there is little room for compromise or doubt—a strong, vivid, and intolerant faith is held. Similarly, there is a strict code of behaviour. Hospitality, in an environment without fixed routes or settlements, is a highly regarded virtue, and ordinary social intercourse has been developed into an elaborate code of manners and conduct. In view of the vagaries of human existence amongst the Badawin, it is hardly surprising that superstition and fatalism are also strongly marked. The operation of the 'evil eye' and malevolent spirits is seen in everyday life—nothing is praised directly without attributing its excellence as due to God—and men and animals wear charms.[1]

Possibly as a result of reduced physical strength, and their enforced preoccupation with household tasks, the status of women is low. Although not veiled, like the women of the settled areas, Badawin women are regarded as in all things the inferiors of men. It may be significant that among pastoral communities, religious deities are regarded as masculine in attribute. Only in the religious systems of non-pastoral peoples do we find female deities—mother-goddesses of wide influence—with a corresponding rise in importance of women above the level of mere drudges and bearers of children.

Though Badawin life is hard and unrewarding, those who follow it value it highly. A true Bedu looks down with disdain on other ways of life, particularly that of cultivators in better watered districts, for whom he often has a profound contempt as effete and subservient. Despite their own strict social organisation, the Badawin can contrast the dull routine of agricultural practice, and the looseness and self-indulgence of city life with their own courage, independence of thought, abstemiousness, and mobility.

Nomadism is a special response to environment, by which the frontier of human occupation is pushed farther within a region of increasing difficulty. In the past, nomadism has often been regarded as an unsatisfactory alternative to agriculture; it was believed that primitive man passed from a life of hunting and collecting first into a stage of pastoralism, and later, in places where conditions were favourable, to the fullest development of a life based on cultivation. In the opinion of H. J. Fleure and others this view must be modified—pastoralism may, in some instances, represent a special, later development *from* agriculture—a dynamic response to environmental

[1] Even Arab taxis in the cities carry a charm on the radiator.

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD;
Bedouins M34

the position of the heavenly bodies be of better augury for thee! God is omnipotent!" 609 578

Ali, sunk in meditation, seemed disturbed by a thousand conflicting thoughts. At length, however, he dutifully kissed the face and back of this typical example of Bedouin diplomacy. Secretly, I had to admire the respect [577] accorded in Arabia even to one's deadly enemy.

Ali grasped my hand. Anger still lingered in his eyes, but his voice sounded pleasant enough as he said to me: "This letter, my friend, is just about as good as a recommendation from Iblis" (the devil), and with a grimace of contempt he tossed it on the fire. I was only just in time to snatch the already singed sheet of paper from the flames; but, as a matter of fact, neither Ali nor I ever had the courage to present the letter to either of the Fid'an chiefs.

To my great delight, Ali offered himself as my *rafiq* for the journey to the Jesirah (Mesopotamia). Within two days he had ferreted out a second-hand Ford car to carry us to the Euphrates.

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala
Bedouins MJH

721 hefty blow nearly broke my arm. The same blow caught me a glancing stroke on the head, hard enough to knock me out. I must have remained unconscious for hours. When I came to, the evening was already fading into twilight, and I found myself lying stark naked on the sand. Happily, it had not been a hot day, for the sky was clouded. Nevertheless, I felt wretched enough, and my head and arm ached. The blow had merely grazed the muscles of my arm, but I had a nasty wound over my temple.

Not far from me Ali was lying on his back. To my horror, he looked quite dead.

Still numb, I tottered over to him. Thank heaven, he was very much alive and able to talk. The Fid'an had handled him worse than me, but his unfailing good humour was already returning. "They have taken everything from me," he said, "except their cursed lice"; and he commenced to scratch himself all over his naked body, protesting the while that he had left Aleppo quite clean.

"The sunburns are itching," I said, with a laugh; "it cannot be the vermin of our friends."

In the deepening dark, I noticed that a fire was burning behind a rise in the ground several hundred yards away, and I concluded that the Fid'an were camping there.

•577 Ali was still feeling too weak to walk with me, and I made my way alone to the fire. As I came near, I recognized the Fid'an sitting round the coffee-hearth.

"Dakhil! Protection!" I cried out.

One of the Bedouins sprang up, rifle in hand. He made

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala
Bedouins M 54

ready to fire, throwing the clip of cartridges into the breach and slamming the lever down. Involuntarily I shut my eyes and staggered, when I heard the voice of the *Akid* (leader) call out to the man not to shoot. The shock had been so great, however, that my knees gave way, and I toppled over. The *Akid*, who had saved my life, came to me. He had a small goat-skin bag filled with liquid butter in his hand, and made me take a few sips, and immediately I felt better. 577

He then led me to the fire and offered me coffee; and I knew by that token that my life was now under his protection.

I asked him for our clothing. He wanted to return it to me, but the other men grumbled and protested, and I had to be content with two old ragged herders' cloaks. I threw one over my shoulders and with the other and a skin of butter, went back to Ali, and after he had gulped down some of the butter, I supported him to the camp fire.

The Fid'an permitted us to seat ourselves among them, and Ali, too, was given coffee. It now turned out that our assailants were quite good fellows. Had we not started arguing when they fell upon us, we should have come off better. Now we were as safe among them as in Abraham's bosom.

In the course of our conversation that evening, I remembered the letter from Amir Fuaz to Hajem Pasha, the missive that had created such a lively disturbance in Aleppo.

"Dost thou read Arabic?" I asked the *Akid;* and when, as I expected, he replied, "No," I continued:

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

keeps for breeding. Similarly, young male camels are sold for food and only a selected few retained to carry the household tents and baggage.

Mares are never sold, and the male foals, if not killed at birth, are a source of income when sold in the towns bordering on Arabia. (See Chapter XXX.)

The Badawin of the desert has a charm of his own, and if you once make friends with him or do him a kindness, he does not forget. He is above all things a child of nature, and is ruled by a strange pride which he calls his *sharaf* and which he values almost above life itself. Scold a desert man or call him ugly names, and he is ready to knife you; at the very least he will sulk, dig his toes into the ground and do nothing that you wish. On the other hand, if you treat him kindly, invite him to sit down in your tent and take a cup of coffee with you, you have gone half-way to win his friendship and confidence. If you treat him as an equal, and not as a servant, even if he is merely your guide or escort, he will react wonderfully and will rarely take liberties.

He is full of humour too, and will understand a joke and a good story, but you must not make fun of him before his fellow Arabs.

Next to his *sharaf*, the Badawin, and for that matter every true Arab, values his family honour or *'ardh*. This word implies the good name of his womenfolk and more especially of his wife and sister. If his *'ardh* is besmirched nothing short of killing the errant woman will restore it. Respect the Badawin's *sharaf*, speak well always of his *'ardh* and help him to guard both, and all will be well with you in your relations with him.

However poor he is and however lowly his dwelling-place, the Badawin excels as a host, and will slay his last camel or sheep to do honour to his guest. Nor are his womenfolk behindhand in this respect. If an important personage passes by her tent in the absence of her husband, the wife will run out of her tent holding out a frothing bowl of camel's milk or *leben*, as a sign of welcome.

THE BADAWIN'S FAULTS

The desert man has his faults, of course, and by Western standards they are grave.

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Bedouins MJ4

516 Dirty he and his wife always are, but theirs is the dirt of the field, a thing totally different from the dirt of the town. He never washes his clothes till they are about to drop off, and then he replaces them. He and his good wife are covered with body lice, and reek of camel manure and other choice odours, but the important parts of the body are kept clean, and the wife bathes her hair once a week in she-camel's urine, and thus rids her head of vermin for a few days.

167 Both the Badawin and his women are envious to a degree, and cupidity is the breath of life to them. Both are as full of *hasad* and *tama'* (envy and cupidity) as anyone in this world could be, and they never tire of saying that others around them suffer from these vices but never they themselves. *Hasad* takes the form of backbiting at every opportunity, and disparaging the efforts and good name of anyone who happens to be better off. His *tama'* is proverbial and has caused him to be dubbed by certain Westerners "the arch parasite of world society". True it is that you can make a Badawin man or woman do pretty well anything in this world except (and here I speak for the desert only) sacrifice his or her honour, by the offer of money.

Yet with all these faults I have found the Badawin and his wife to be the most lovable and delightful of all people, just primitive Adams and Eves, like their ancestors.

771 The true Badawin is a deeply religious man, and his hard life in the desert with its perpetual dangers to man and beast increases his sense of nearness to and dependence on his Maker. The grim scenery which surrounds him, the wide sandy deserts, the blood-colour of blazing sunsets, the deep yellow-black of the dust storms, a very incarnation of monstrous evil, and last but not least the devilish flicker of the witch's oven, as it trembles above the ground, with its cruel sister the ever-deceiving mirage, all tend to convince him that the One and Indivisible God is near him always and if only he be a true Musulmán will help him when peril is about. The thought of God is always with him, and the name of Allah is perpetually on his [788] lips. He prays ceremonially five times a day. He can and will do 577 nothing without invoking God's aid. After his duty towards God, comes duty towards his neighbour, and to a lesser extent towards himself. His whole code can be summed up in the following few sentences:

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The Badawin's Code

577

A man's first duty is towards God.
His second, the protection of his tent neighbour (*qasir*).
His third, attention to the laws of Hospitality (*dhidfa*).
His fourth, his duty towards a traveller under his conduct (*rafiq*).
His fifth, attention to the laws of Personal Protection and Sanctuary (*wejh* and *dakhdla*.)
His sixth and last is to himself: to raid when he can and keep what he has captured (*chessib*).

It is noteworthy that in fulfilling this last duty he thinks of it as a sort of reward for what has gone before. Raiding is no sin, but a virtue, [721] and to kill your enemy a still greater virtue. Therefore, to steal your enemy's cattle is not robbery but an exploit to be proud of. Your enemy will do the same to you to-morrow if he gets the chance. (See Chapter VII.)

THE BADAWIN WOMAN (*Badawiyah*)

Taking the good with the bad, the Badawin woman is nearly all 157 charm, the natural charm of an unspoiled daughter of Eve, who knows nothing of the world, and little of town life except from hearsay.

She has very much of the child about her; all the delightfulness and all the unreasonableness of a child.

She is prone to sudden storms of rage, and will sulk without apparent reason. She is full of jealousy, and will love and hate with passion and ferocity, yet she can be the gentlest of beings and is capable of great sacrifice. She adores her children, though she has no idea of [855] teaching them discipline or self-control; she will fly at her husband, if he attempts to punish their child, and will go off the deep end if her husband does not sleep close by her side (*ma yargud wiyha*) every night.

Badawin unmarried girls are, of course, debarred from any male 562 society or male friendships outside the circle of their own immediate 834 families, but married women have far more freedom than their town sisters, and can be on delightfully friendly terms with males of their own *taifa* or *hamula*. They have strong ideas of propriety, and are sensitive to a degree about their reputation. The most 521 dreadful thing in the world that can happen to them is to be talked 558

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him to make his escape to safety, if necessary calling in all his own family for the purpose. Or if the *qasir* says he will pay blood money in settlement, then the protector must protect him until the negotiations are put through.

If a *qasir's* tribe declares war on his protector's tribe, and later the *qasir's* camels are captured by raiders belonging to the protector's tribe, then the latter is absolved from returning the camels and vice versa, unless both protector and his *qasir* make public declaration before their respective shaikhs that they are tent-neighbours (*qusara*) and each will make good any damage suffered by the other party. If, then, the tribe of either party accidentally or purposely captures camels or mares from either of the men, they must return the loot when asked to do so.

The protector must make this public declaration to his own shaikh in person, and if the *qasir* cannot get through himself he must send neutral messengers to his own shaikh and people and do likewise.

Should the protector have in his employ a strange Badawin to herd his camels or sheep, and raiders of the herdsman's tribe suddenly appear and carry off the herd, then because the man in charge is their own fellow-tribesman the raiders must restore three she-camels to the herdsman, one for riding on and two for milking.

Certain desert tribes, notably the Dhafir, are particularly proud of the name they have won for protecting their tent-neighbours. They have become famous in this respect, as the following stories will show. (The chief actors in both cases were well known to me, though Hamud al Suwait has now been dead some years.)

The uncle of Hamud al Suwait, the Shaikh of all the Dhafir tribe, once threatened in public *majlis*, to impale himself on his sword which he had drawn for the purpose, unless *his own son* were brought before him and slain in his presence, because the son had killed his tent-neighbour in the heat of a foolish quarrel. The various members of the family tried hard to shield the youth, but realising that the old shaikh was in deadly earnest, Hamud al Suwait (he became shaikh after his uncle's death two years later) himself seized the boy and with his own hand cut him down before the eyes of his father. Thus was tribal honour satisfied. This incident happened in 1912, and was told

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554 me by Shaikh Hamud himself, and later vo ned for by the Shaikh
619 of Kuwait on 9th September, 1932.

622 Shaikh Jada'an al Suwait, who succeeded to the Shaikhship of the
628 Dhafir after the death of Hamud, was camped near Athaiba and
577 Ruhail on the Kuwait–Iraq border in 1931. Hearing that one of his own tribesmen had fired at and wounded a Mutairi tribesman who was his *qasir* at the time, even though the Mutair tribe and the Dhafir tribe were open enemies, Shaikh Jada'an had the offending tribesman brought before him, and with his own hand slashed him over the head with his sword.

The deed flashed through the Badawin world like lightning at the time, and Jada'an's name, as the upholder of Badawin hon our, [682] became almost as famous as that of his forbear. Unfortunately the Iraq authorities, with that folly which has frequently characterised them in dealing with the high-spirited tribesmen of the desert, imprisoned Shaikh Jada'an for several weeks, before they saw that they were making a martyr of a desert hero. This act cost them his allegiance. Shortly after, Shaikh Jada'an went over to Bin Sa'ud, taking half the tribe with him.

Shaikh Jada'an told me the story himself, saying that he only acted as he did in order to keep the vital Badawin law clean and untarnished.

So greatly have the Dhafir tribe preserved and guarded their good name in the above respect, that it is said of Mana, another famous Shaikh of the Dhafir, that the immediate cause of his death was the news (which was brought to him as he was riding home from a raid), that a certain well-known guest of the tribe had, in his absence, been attacked and slain. Certain it is that on being told what had happened, his heart seemed to stop beating and he fell forward on to his camel's neck and rolled to the ground a dead man. His daughter, whom I met in 1935, told me that the old man had literally died of a broken heart, and her words were vouched for by her husband, Shaikh Hautush al Suwait, cousin of Jada'an.

621 I myself have only once been appealed to by a person who was
671 my *qasir*. I am glad to say that the results were eminently satisfactory.
577 It happened on this wise. I was in Kuwait, and it was in the hot month of July 1932, when everyone was sleeping on the roof at night. I was sleeping outside the old Agency dining-room, over the cook's quarters.

l: Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
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Chap. VII

A Midnight Appeal

Next door and behind the Agency premises resided the divorced tribal wife of a well-known pearl merchant. She was a pure-bred tribal lady of the Wasil sept of the Mutair, and had been put away by her husband because he wanted to marry again. With the lady lived her daughter, a girl of about fifteen. The daughter was all the mother had in the world and was the pride and apple of her eye.

The roof on which I slept at night abutted on to the house of the lady in question, her roof was only some eight feet higher than mine and owing to its proximity to mine she herself never utilised her roof for sleeping.

Apparently, although I did not know it at the time, my neighbour's daughter had a male cousin who aspired to her hand. He had custom and the *Shari'a* law on his side, and asked to marry the girl. The mother had steadfastly refused, on the plea that she had only her daughter to work for her, and without her she would starve. After much pressure the mother had apparently agreed to let her daughter marry if sufficient money compensation was paid her for the years of trouble and expense which she had incurred in bringing her daughter up.

Actually she wanted sufficient money to enable her to live. The young man and his people refused her demands and complained to the shaikh. The latter decided that the young man was within his rights, and ordered the girl to be removed to some distant relative's house, whence after due ceremony and regard for convention she would be married. Four times the shaikh's *fidawiyah*, or guards, came round to the mother's house, and each time she refused them entry. The law did not permit them to enter forcibly, but they vowed that law or no law her position as a woman would not prevent them next time breaking open her door and forcibly abducting the girl.

It was then that the incident happened. I was asleep on my roof and the night was hot without moon. It was about twelve midnight when I awoke to hear my name called, "Ya Abu Sa'ud—Ya Abu Sa'ud," came the voice out of the darkness, "Wake up and listen". Wide-awake now, I realised that someone was addressing me in a low whisper from my neighbour's roof, only a few yards away. "What is it?" I said. "Who are you that startles me like this at dead of night?" "I am your *gasir*," replied the voice with a moan, "I am daughter of

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621 671 577 So-and-So, and I appeal to you to listen to me." Realising then who was speaking to me over the wall, I learned her whole tale. At the end she said, "Ya Abu Sa'ud, I am in the deepest distress, I entreat you to help, I, your *qasir*, your neighbour, your tent *jar*" (another word for neighbour). "What wouldst thou that I do for thee, my sister?" I replied. "Go to-morrow morning," she said, "and tell Shaikh Ahmad of my plight, and fight for me and my daughter, for verily if they take her away I shall die." To all my pleading that she was not under my jurisdiction, she merely replied, "I know nothing about that. All I know is that you are my neighbour and the law makes it incumbent on you to come to my assistance."

The end of it was that I promised to do as she asked, and on the next day I went and saw the Ruler, apologised for butting in where I was not concerned, but pointed out that my *qasir* had appealed in such and such manner to me, and that as I understood the importance of such an appeal, I in turn begged his intervention on her behalf. The shaikh was so struck with my tale, and so delighted that I pleaded with him for one of his Muslim subjects against his own decision, that he turned round and said very charmingly, "Colonel Dickson, this law of the *qasir* is a very sacred one for us Arabs; that you know and understand the depth of its meaning is patent to me, else you would never have acted as you have done. The girl is yours, give her back to her mother and say I, Ahmad, revoke my orders previously given. Even as you listened to the woman who appealed to you as *qasir*, so likewise I will listen to you and grant your request, to prove to you how deeply I feel you have been honoured by one of my country-women, and how deeply I also honour the law of *qusara*." I was much impressed by the shaikh's words, and it will be long before I forget his remarkable reply. His orders were duly passed on to my neighbour, and to this day the poor woman shows her gratitude in little kindnesses to my servants. I never again saw her to speak to.

SHÍMA

577 The Arab's idea of *shíma* is much the same as our conception of honour, and I shall illustrate it only by the story given below.

Othman al Rashid of Buraida (an ex-horse-dealer of Kuwait) on

k: Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

Arab Honour

12th August, 1933, told the following story of Arab *shima*. He vouched for its truth. 577

Many years ago, in the time of Muhammad al Rashid, there lived in Buraida a prominent member of the family of Al Ribádi. This man had seen great days and prosperous, but through bad trade had fallen on evil days. Of all his herds of camels, and he had had many, he possessed only one *nágá* (she-camel). This camel he one day decided to sell, as being old and worn she was no longer of use to him. He therefore asked a passing Shammari Badawin who had come in from the Jabal if he would take the animal away with him and would sell her when in due time he visited Hail. The money he could hand over at his leisure when next he visited Qasim. The Shammari agreed and took the camel off with him. As luck would have it the journey to Hail was too much for her, she sickened and died on the way. The worthy Shammari decided that as the skin was of some value he would realise something on it for the owner, so he took the camel's skin, salted it, and departed to his own country. Then came the great wars between the Rashid and Sa'ud dynasties and for years the Buraida merchant heard nothing of his camel. He had forgotten all about it, and became an old man, for it was thirty years since the incident took place. One day forty-two beautiful new and strong camels were driven up. One old and two young men were asking the way to his home. It turned out to be the Shammari of thirty years back. He came to give the Buraida merchant his *haq* (right). "Your she-camel died, but her skin enabled me to get a few rials, with these I traded, still I got enough to buy you a new *nágá*. The new *nágá* bore a daughter, and these camels you see are all her descendants. They are all yours. I had no opportunity before to bring you what I owed you."

THE LAW OF DAKHÁLA AND WEJH

Dakhála, from the root *'udkhul*—to enter—means the law of entering into a person's protection as a suppliant. 609

This most honoured and sacred of Arab customs exists all over Arabia and in Iraq, and finds strongest support perhaps among the Badawin, as opposed to the settled tribes and townsmen. An Arab claims *dakhála* by saying, *ana dakhílak* or *ana dakhíl 'a l'Allah wa*

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
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stantly find themselves thwarted by it. This is a pity, for if properly understood there is nothing shameful or anti-social in the system. It would be wiser for the law to recognise its existence and make use of it and of other time-honoured Arab customs.

In 1933 my friend, Shaikh Lafi ibn Ma'allath of the Mutair (Braih) tribe, a faithful warrior and servant of Bin Sa'ud, was forced to flee to Iraq, because a man pursued by Bin Sa'ud's blockade-police took refuge in his tent, and invoked the law of *dakhdla*. When the police threatened to search for the fugitive the stout-hearted shaikh signalled to his followers and fellow tent-dwellers to close around, and said he would resist the man's arrest by force of arms if necessary. Baulked of their prey the police (all townsmen) went away angry and sullen, and reported the incident to Ibn Jiluwi, their master. Lafi, feeling that he had got a breathing-space, and knowing that he would never be forgiven, fled across the border with his cousins, relatives, women, children, thirty tents in all, never to come back. Had the police bided their time, three days, they could probably have followed and made an arrest. Instead, they drove a faithful and loyal servant of the King into exile.

Cases of a similar nature are legion, and do almost more than anything else to promote bad feeling between the tribal elements of Arabia and the local governments.

The root trouble is, of course, the desire of upstart kings and princes, eager to ape the West, to break down all tribal systems, because they think these mark a backward state of society.

Akin to *dakhdla* is the conception of *wejh* or *tisyar*. This literally means "face". *Be wejh fulan* (lit. "In So-and-So's face") means under the protection or safe conduct of So-and-So, and is a phrase very commonly heard in the desert. The penalties for outraging a person's *dakhdla*, *wejh* or *tisyar* (as the Iraq tribesmen call *wejh*) are very severe indeed; a heavy fine is exacted from any person purposely defying the custom. This fine is called *hashm* or "honour money" in Iraq. A man surrendering to the police another who has claimed *dakhdla* will be relentlessly pursued by the suppliant's relations and will be slain unless he compounds the case by paying *hashm* to the tribe.

The following anecdote of how a British officer was saved by

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
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577 seeking sanctuary with Hasan Agha and his womenfolk near Samawa on the Euphrates, provides a good illustration of the working of *dakhdla*.

609 In 1919 Hasan Agha, a married man with family, was a small farmer living a little way above the iron railway bridge at Samawa. He dealt with the tribes of Rumaitha, bought their grain and knew everyone in that region. He was a popular figure and the English esteemed him highly as a good farmer and one interested in his lands. Then came the Arab revolt of 1920–21. It broke out like a lightning flash first in Rumaitha, and the tribes of that place opened the ball by rushing the Political Officer's Headquarters and releasing prisoners from gaol. It so happened that a young British officer in civil employ was away from Rumaitha the day the storm broke. He had been riding out towards the south-west in the direction of the Euphrates and knew nothing of what had taken place, but as he neared Rumaitha again he heard shots, and saw some horsemen detach themselves from the town and come rapidly towards him. At first he thought them friends, but as they came galloping towards him shouting and firing as they rode, he realised that something serious was amiss. He turned south again to make for Samawa. The horsemen, seeing his intention, gave tongue, and the young Englishman set spurs to his horse. He gained on his pursuers, but owing to floods near the railway bridge upstream of Samawa, was forced to turn in a south-westerly direction. He bethought him of Hasan Agha's farm near the river and reached it a bare couple of miles ahead of his pursuers. Arriving at the large semicircular *muthif* built of mats and reeds that was Hasan Agha's house, he called out his name several times. For a while there was no reply, then out came a woman who said her husband, Hasan, was away, and enquired what the caller wanted. The young Englishman, exhausted with his hard ride, pointed to the oncoming horsemen, and begged shelter and protection. The woman called out her two daughters and told them quickly to join her in her women's quarters and bring out their *'abbas*. The women took the Englishman into their innermost room and covered him with his hostess's own cloak. She herself and her two daughters sat in front of him sewing. Suddenly the horsemen rode up, and in loud voices asked for Hasan Agha. Getting no response the leader dismounted, and putting his head in the women's room

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
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609 machine for Hasan. He did not possess it long, for when full independence was granted to Iraq, the leaders of the new Arab Government deprived Hasan Agha of his pump.

(NOTE.—The above story was told me in this form by Hasan Agha himself. It differs very considerably from the account published in *Blackwood's Magazine* of August 1921 by the chief actor in the drama.)

Before closing this chapter I must quote one more example of Arab chivalry. It was told me on 10th March, 1937, by Shaikh 'Ali al Khalifah al Subah and next day confirmed by the hero of it, ibn Khazar himself, who later became a great friend of mine.

622 628 577 About thirty years before, when 'Abdul Muhsin ibn Khazar, Shaikh of the Bani Khalid, was a young man, he was famed far and wide as a raider. Many and great were his deeds of endurance and bravery. One day he carried out a distant foray against the U'taiba, in course of which he killed a well-known shaikh, galloping after him and single-handed shooting him in the back with his carbine. On his return from the raid he was sitting round his camp-fire regaling his friends with the story when there entered the son of the Shaikh of the Za'ab tribe (*bani 'ám* to the 'Adwan). He must be told the story over again, and coming to the part of how he dropped the 'Utaiba leader from his horse with one flying shot, 'Abdul Muhsin pointed his weapon at the Za'ab lad and fired. He never dreamed that his carbine was loaded as it unfortunately was. The son of the Za'ab Shaikh was killed.

In horror, he was for a time at a loss what to do. His Bani Khalid people tried to persuade him to report that the youth had been killed in a nearby raid, but ibn Khazar held that this would be contrary to Arab honour. He rode off to the boy's father and told him exactly what had happened. At the end of his recital he loaded his carbine handed it to the Shaikh of the Za'ab and begged him to avenge his son's blood. The shaikh generously refused. Not to be outdone, 'Abdul Muhsin declared that he would be a second son to the bereaved father till he died. He kept his word, giving his adopted father half of his sheep and camels, half of any loot (*chessib*) which he ever gained in a raid, and half of any presents that he ever received from ibn Sa'ud or the Shaikhs of Bahrain. He continued to do this until the old man died.

151 721 followed these tracks for about two hundred yards. He then came back to us and said that fifteen Awamir from the north had raided the Junuba near the southern coast, lifted three of their camels, watered at a certain well, and passed this way twelve days before. I myself could not have been certain that the tracks were even the tracks of camels, they were so blown by the wind, but he had read the whole story. We had been out of touch with all Arabs for over a month, but when we met Badu they confirmed that this raid had taken place exactly as he had said. It is, however, a mistake to think that all Badu can track. Some of them are as bad at tracking as they are at guiding, but when you meet a good tracker or a good guide his skill is uncanny.

181 577 609 574 You might think that a life like this, where to keep alive at all is only just possible, was bound to degenerate into a brutish struggle for survival. But this is not so. These Badu are, it is true, hard and ruthless, avaricious and impatient of restraint, yet no people are so generous. They will give away their clothes literally from off their backs, and they are brave, loyal to each other, courteous, patient, and unselfish. I have spent the greater part of the last five years with them, and I have found it hard indeed to live up to their standards of decency. Arab hospitality is famous, but I wonder if you realize what it implies. The Badu do not ask someone to dinner when they have got something extra or when they feel inclined. One or two or half a dozen people are travelling past, see an encampment, and decide to spend the night there, for the traveller in the desert takes a free meal of anyone he sees. The host and his family are probably almost starving, yet everything they have is routed out and set before their self-invited guests, whom they may never have seen before, and if possible they will slaughter an animal for their dinner. I have often received this hospitality, and even now it makes me uncomfortable, though my host has sent me away in the morning feeling that it really was I who had conferred a kindness on him. Of course, another time it is one's host who is travelling and taking meals off someone else, so it evens up, I suppose. But it is not that; it is the wonderful, open-hearted, ungrudging way in which they do it. I am afraid I have always resented the sight of unwanted guests when we were short of food.

576 264 When travelling they always divide up their food before each meal and then draw lots for it, otherwise there is invariably an argument, never because someone says he has been given too little, but because he maintains that he has received too much. Among semi-settled Arabs, where the strict Badu conventions are not necessarily observed, you soon see how [271] quickly it is resented when someone always takes the largest piece. Once 576 we reached a well after we had been twenty-four hours without water, yet no one would drink when we arrived because some of our party had lingered behind to graze their camels, and they would only drink when [486] everyone was there. The bond which exists between travelling companions is indeed tremendously strong; it is only this which makes travelling possible at all. If you are accompanied by a tribesman from a hostile tribe, you are safe from that tribe while he is with you, and he 577 would fight in your defence even against his own brothers. To betray a companion is the blackest crime which a Badu can commit; but it goes

further than this, for none of them wishes to get a reputation for being a quarrelsome or trying companion, and so, when there is anything to do, they all jump up and offer to do it, whether it is to look for a camel, gather wood, or make coffee. Their life is ruled by conventions, and public opinion sees to it that these conventions are observed. In the desert there is no privacy. Every action is seen, and you might say every word is overheard, for they always live crowded together for safety; in any case, they are the most observant people in the world, and everything that happens, however trivial, is noted and later repeated and discussed, so that something which a man has said or done on the coast of the Persian Gulf will be spoken of months later, hundreds of miles away on the borders of the Yaman.

Another difference between Badu and villagers is the way they treat their animals. No Badui would ever knock his camel about; it is far too precious, and in any case he is much too deeply attached to it. You will often see him fondling and kissing his camel, and he will generally be hunting round for titbits for it. Badui, indeed, will always sacrifice their own comfort to that of their animals. Some years ago, when we arrived in the Hadhramaut out of the desert, I remember the enormous meals which were provided for us, such as my always hungry companions cannot even have dreamed of; yet next day they were frantic to get back to the desert where there would be proper grazing for their animals. Sometimes, looking at a wonderful view, I have said to a Badui, "Isn't that lovely?" and he has looked round for a bit and answered, "No, it is rotten bad grazing," and he saw nothing else, whereas if he had been a Persian he would have rhapsodized over it.

Yet they are passionately fond of poetry. They are a noisy, talkative race. I think many of them would find it as hard to stop talking as a heavy smoker to stop smoking, but they will sit for hours in silence if someone is reciting poetry. They are also deeply religious, and in their hard lives they derive at all times a profound comfort from their faith. Townsmen often scoff at them and say that they are little better than pagans because they do not observe all the ritual of Islam and are sometimes lax over their prayers and fasting, but you cannot be with them without realizing what an integral part of their everyday lives their religion is. A Rashdi once described to me how alone he had crossed the trackless wastes of the Eastern sands for 450 waterless miles. Astounded that anyone should have ventured on such a journey unaccompanied, I asked him, "Do you really mean that you were by yourself?" and he answered me quite simply, "God was my companion."

The Badu are the product of their environment, and it is the constant struggle for survival which has fashioned them as they are. Security is unknown to them and their rewards are at all times pitifully small. At any moment drought, disease, or raiders may sweep their herds away. Yet, tempered from childhood by wind and sun, they face life unflinchingly. In this harsh and barren land the desert lad mates only with the desert maid, for who else would share the Badu's couch among the wind-blown sand? For centuries they have guarded the purity of their blood with the dagger, and they are fine-drawn, highly strung, and unstable as thoroughbreds.

181 554 177 577 thoroughbreds. No race prizes lineage higher, yet they are the most democratic people in the world and the most individualistic. Among them there is real equality. To certain families, by virtue of their descent, they accord certain privileges, but as a courtesy, not as a right, and Badu sheikhs command respect only as long as they merit it. The traditional Arab way of life, fast vanishing to-day in contact with the West, owed much to Badu concepts, for the villagers and townsmen of Arabia, who form by far the greater part of her population, live close to the desert and were profoundly affected by it until motor-cars and aeroplanes removed for ever the need for camel journeys. Most of them are, indeed, of Badu origin, for the desert tides have always stranded the weak and broken upon the fringes of the Sown. Everywhere the Arabs have, at all times, judged honour and chivalry and hospitality by the standards of the tribesmen. Their love of liberty, their freedom from prejudice of class and caste, and their enthusiasm for poetry have come to them from the desert.

157 577 81 It is impossible to assess the character of the Badu, for among no other race have so many contradictory qualities been fused together. I myself have witnessed their courage and self-reliance, their endurance and pride of race, and I remember their patience, generosity, and unselfishness. But often I have been exasperated by their avarice and wearied by their endless [735] importunities. No Badu thinks it shame to beg, and usually he will look disparagingly at the gift which he has received and grumble, "Is this all [437] that you are going to give me?" Grasping and avaricious, they will talk unceasingly of money and argue heatedly for days about a dollar, then they will slaughter a camel worth 150 dollars to feed a stranger. Loyal to each other, they are yet without regard for human life and will knife an unarmed herdsboy with a jest. Cheerful and easily amused, they are generally good-tempered, though passionate when roused and quick to resent an injury.

166 I have often wondered as I rode across the desert what the future, and even the immediate future, holds for my companions and their kinsmen. The discovery of oil on the Persian Gulf is going to affect them profoundly and make it impossible for them to continue in their old ways, even if they would. I think myself that the oilfields will empty the desert. This movement of tribes from the Yaman and the Hadhramaut towards the north and the north-east is a movement which has been going on for thousands of years. It probably started even before the great migration of the Qahtan tribes, when, overwhelmed by calamity in their homes round Marib, some of them pushed across the deserts and occupied Oman. In recent years tribes such as the Awamir, Ruashid, and Manahil have left their homelands in the steppes to the north-east of the Hadhramaut and moved out into the sands to escape from the incursions of more powerful 166 tribes pressing on them from the west. Having accustomed themselves to 177 life in the sands, they have penetrated ever further and further into the Empty Quarter. In the past twenty or thirty years as conditions have become more settled in the north, due to the extension of Ibn Saud's influence over the powerful Murra tribe, they have grazed their herds round the Liwa oasis and in the sands near the Trucial Coast. Now the money to be earned on the oilfields along the Gulf is drawing the Badu

in ever-increasing numbers from as far away as Najran and Dhaufar. 166
They go there at present with the intention of collecting enough money 177
to buy a camel or two, so that they can build up a new herd, or perhaps marry, when they return to their homelands, but I think that every year an increasing number will settle down more or less permanently round the oilfields.

In the desert the Badu need very little to keep themselves alive. Their 438
herds provide them with milk, butter, and occasionally with meat, but 433
they have certain requirements which they cannot supply for themselves. 511
They need cloth and cooking pots, knives, ammunition, an occasional load of dates or grain, and such simple luxuries as a handful of coffee or a little tobacco. To get these things they visit the villages or towns and sell a goat, a little butter, water skins, rugs, and ropes. Life in the desert ceases, however, to be physically possible if the few but entirely essential commodities that the desert Arab has hitherto been able to buy in exchange for the products of the desert become too expensive for him to afford, but the rise in the standard of living along the Persian Gulf is bound to send up the price of food and clothing, and the slightest rise is now fatal to the desert economy. For the Badu have already lost several 489
important resources. In the past, desert transport was in their hands, but 231
now lorries have largely replaced camels. There was also a constant demand in the towns and villages for good riding camels, which were hired by the nomads, and sheikhs would pay big prices for the best breeds. Now most of the villagers and townsmen drive about in cars. Two years ago, when I and my companions rode from Sulayil to Laila along the motor road, the villagers asked us why we did not go in cars "like the Muslamin." A Badui often loses all or nearly all his animals from disease, 434
but where the tribes are still unadministered he can borrow a mount and 511
join a raiding party and perhaps repair his fortunes. In unadministered areas they can also levy a certain amount of blackmail off the villagers, and the village sheikhs are prepared to keep on good terms with the tribes by giving them presents and much hospitality. Badu, however, meet with little sympathy from modern and progressive Arab administrators, who regard them as representing an outlook and way of life which they are anxious to abolish.

The Badu love money; even to handle it seems to give them a thrill, 181
and I have often thought that when they are talking in their sleep they 577
must be counting piles of dollars. Yet I have never had a single dollar 461
stolen on my journeys, though my money has always been carried in 315
unsealed bags distributed at random among the saddle-bags of my companions. The Badu are always obsessed with tales of buried treasure. There is *dhahab* (gold) to be found here and *dhahab* to be found there, under sand dunes, rocks, or even in the middle of quicksands. So naturally the oilfields draw them like a magnet from all over Arabia, and, once there, they find that they can get money for sitting in the shade and guarding something, or for doing work which is certainly easier than watering thirsty camels on a nearly dry well in the middle of summer. There is plenty of good food, abundant sweet water, and long hours for 511
sleep. They have seldom had these things before, and now they are being 166

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156 609 conditions, singly or in combination, cause the attitude of individuals or groups to differ in degree. As a general rule nomads who range habitually on the fringes of alien civilized areas are more dangerous to encounter than those habitually withdrawn in the wilds. Thus, the northern and western constituents of the great Anazah group are less safe to visit than the Shammar. Other contingent circumstances may make particular groups yet more hostile—if, for example, they range near the political frontier of two alien powers, as do the eastern Sinaitic groups; or in a difficult mountainous country, like the Huweitāt and Huteim east and north of Akaba; or where shelter and water can be obtained in hidden rocky recesses, as among the Beni Sakhr in the southern trans-Jordan region; or in insalubrious low-lying tracts such as the Yemen Tihāmah, or the southern part of Hasa, or the eastern part of the south coast, which account for the evil repute of the Zaranik (*Dharāniq*), the Ahl Murrah, and the Qara tribes respectively.

Certain of the inland tribes, however, have reputations as bad or worse, and in their case one must look for peculiar causes. The ill fame of some groups of the Harb, for example—of one group especially, the 'Auf sub-tribe of the Masrūh section—is probably due to temptation long put in their way by the pilgrim routes, where these pass through a lean region debated between two powers. The repute, again, of the Qahtān, reckoned by the popular voice the most savage of Bedouin groups, may be accounted for by their seclusion and isolation along the northern fringe of the impenetrable Southern Desert. It is possible, however, that in both these instances report is worse than fact—in the one, because it is the well-known pilgrim route that has so often suffered, in the other because the northern Bedouins, who chiefly inform European minds, [266] know very little about the group in question. It is common talk, for example, that some of the Qahtān tribes are cannibal. On investigation, this imputation is always passed southward to the next group, till it finally fades away into *terra incognita*.

One word of caution, however, must be uttered about such cut-and-dried tribal reputations. They have not, in some cases, been always the same. The Huteim, for instance, who have a bad name for robbery now, used to be esteemed among the most inoffensive of nomads—almost on a par with the despised but universally tolerated Sulubba. Some one familiar with the desert talk of the moment should always be consulted before the desert itself is entered.

609 ●577 621 The least suspicious and most trustworthy Bedouins are, naturally, those of the largest and best-knit tribes, especially such as form part of a federation under the central authority of one of the

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greater Emirs of the Grand Sherif. These tribes are not only controlled to some extent and directed to a common policy, but also have a tradition of self-respect, which ensures the observance of the Bedouin code of hospitality. As Doughty has well said, what stands to a Bedouin for religion is that which men will think of him. Fortunately the fame of a lavish entertainer and a protector of the guest is a condition of nobility among Bedouins; and an appeal against any action inconsistent with this will seldom be disregarded. A properly authorized stranger, whatever his creed, should have little to fear under ordinary circumstances among such tribes as the Shammar, the Ateibah, the Wuld 'Ali, or the Ruweilah.

What, however, does proper authority mean to the ordinary Bedouin? Not the exhibition of any passport or other written document. Letters from the chief Emirs, the Grand Sherif, or other great sheikhs are very valuable if the traveller is passing from one of them to another; but in ninety out of a hundred desert camps he will find no one who can read or will respect paper. The one thing needful is a *rafīq*, i. e. a companion derived from the tribe through whose range one must pass, or from some tribe allied with it or authorized to share its range. If possible, he should be a man of importance whose face will be recognized instantly by the desert men—a race which, like other unlettered races, keeps a long memory for faces and a very wide knowledge of personalities. Still better if he has been attached to the traveller by some well-known chief. The *rafīq* must be kept well in evidence and to the fore in case of such a sudden attack as Shakespear experienced at the hands of the Ateibah in Woshm, when a good deal of harm was done before his *rafīq* could make himself known in the night to the raiders. In territories controlled by a central authority, e. g. a sovereign Emir, a well-known man from the centre may suffice throughout; but even then it is better to take a *rafīq* from tribe to tribe. There are one or two denominations of Arabs who are franked by all tribes and can themselves conduct a traveller anywhere in more or less security; but it is rather less than more. Such are the *'Uqeil* (Ageyl)—recognized carriers—and the *Sulubba* (Solubba)—tinkers, medical magicians, hunters—whom no one molests. But travelling with such folk entails the disadvantage that one must go where they wish to go and at their pace; and in disturbed districts near frontiers their aegis is not to be relied upon.

The efficacy of the *rafīq* system is based on the recognition that a particular range or dīra (*dīrah*) appertains to each tribe, and even to each main section of a tribe. Tribes sometimes hold their dīras in common, as the 'Ajmān and Beni Khālid are said to do at present in

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609 northern Hasa; and there are certain districts, containing but few
486 wells, where several tribes, each having a right of watering, cross and recross each other's dīras, without committing thereby acts of trespass, though not without engendering frequent friction. Such, for example, are the steppe west of Jebel Shammar and that north-east of the same district towards the lower Euphrates valley. For the right of crossing a dīra the traveller is expected to pay in money or kind to the chief, who often drives a very hard bargain, but should not be regarded as levying blackmail. After all, in return for the payment, he and his tribe concede protection and allow the traveller to consume some of their very scanty supply of fodder and
621 water. All Arab society is patriarchal. Some one man can answer for each unit, and among the best Arabs for very large units. The traveller's chief danger arises where tribes are small or so broken up that not more than one or two families recognize a chief.

486 There is, however, one recognized exception to this sanctity of
721 dīras, namely, the right of every tribe, or even section of a tribe, to
● 577 raid any other according to a well-established code of warfare, unless barred by definite federation, treaty, or ancient friendship. To go
621 out on raid (*ghazwah*) is the young man's chance of proving himself, and to provide him with that opportunity is virtually obligatory on all tribes, except the meanest. The greater chiefs, like their ancient cousins, the Assyrian kings, make an annual practice of the Raid. The farther afield it goes, the greater the glory in a society punctiliously sensitive to public opinion. Raiding parties may, therefore, be met very far from the ranges of their own people, and no district is quite safe from them. They may generally be recognized by their travelling light, without women, and on high-bred camels. The *rafiq* is powerless against them in his own dīra, except possibly through some lucky friendship on his part or the repute of his tribe. But raiding parties are not very particular. They will swoop down on a caravan without asking many questions or being much disposed to respect persons. Unless the traveller's party is very decidedly stronger than the attack, it should submit at once. Most of its belongings will be taken, but no life. Such submission is a well-recognized part of the game, and entails no slur on the courage of any members of the party.

486 The more the traveller can learn and retain in his mind of the
181 genealogy of individuals and tribes, in a land where pedigrees are very widely known back to a hoar antiquity and inordinately valued,
574 the better for his safety and the impression he will make and leave on his hosts. He should know also, as far as possible, the political grouping of tribes and recent desert history. If, like Doughty, he